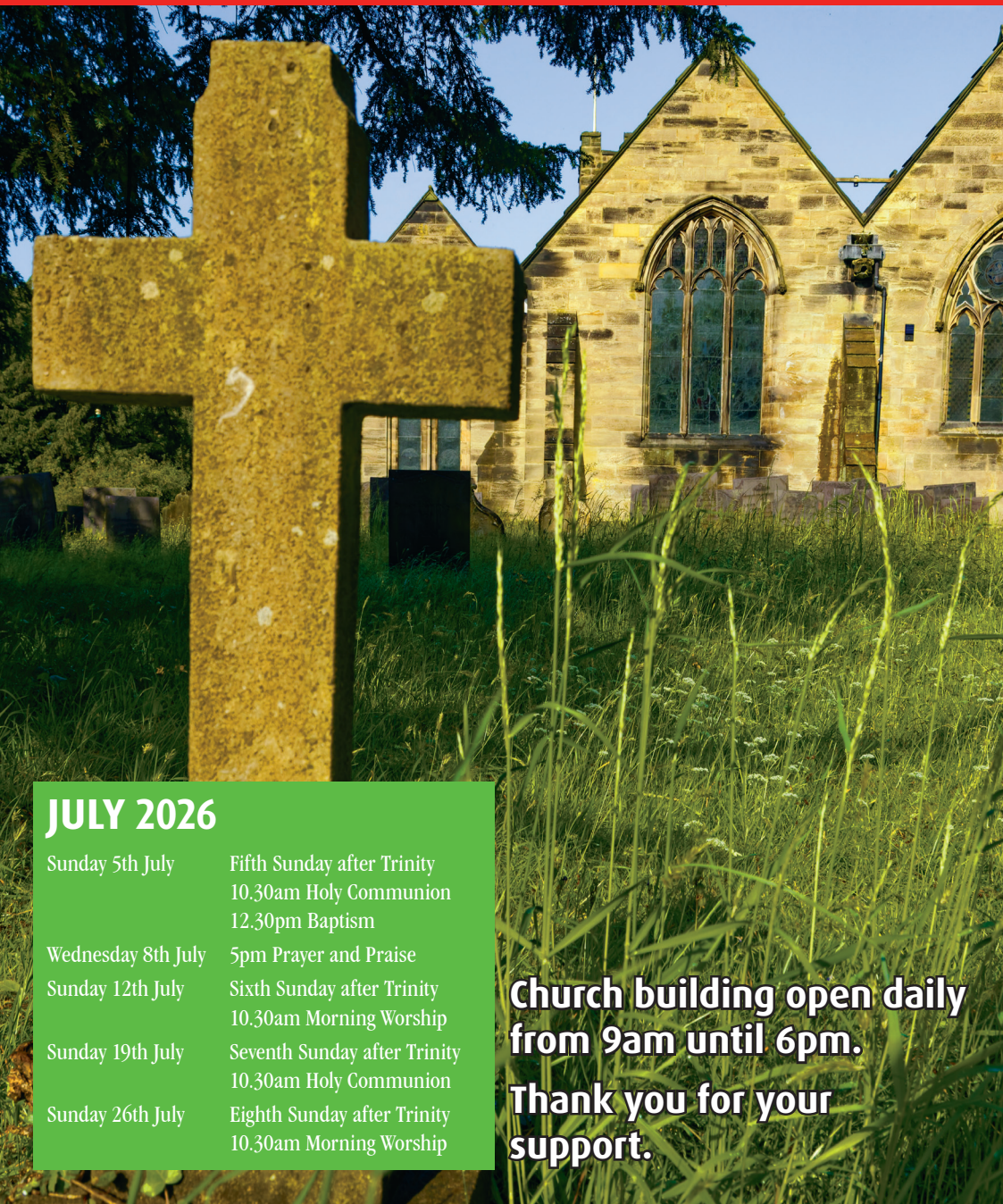


The Village Herald

Your Church & Community Magazine



JULY 2026

Sunday 5th July	Fifth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Holy Communion 12.30pm Baptism
Wednesday 8th July	5pm Prayer and Praise
Sunday 12th July	Sixth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Morning Worship
Sunday 19th July	Seventh Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 26th July	Eighth Sunday after Trinity 10.30am Morning Worship

**Church building open daily
from 9am until 6pm.**
**Thank you for your
support.**



Rev'd Jules writes

It is a pleasure to write to you this month. Well... I can't quite believe that I have been with you all for almost one year already. The time has flown since I arrived here in the Brereton, Rugeley and Armitage with Handsacre Benefice. We moved into St Michael's Vicarage just over a year ago now, just before I was ordained Deacon in Lichfield Cathedral by Bishop Michael at the end of June 2025. What a year it has been! I have learnt so much about ministry but more importantly about all of you! About the local communities that make up our Benefice. This has been a fantastic experience. Armitage is a wonderful village with some of its history very much part of Armitage Shanks, as well as mining and service life too. Brereton and Rugeley have very much mining at the heart of their communities.

I have had the privilege of learning how to take a funeral service right from the first contact with the family at my first visit to interring ashes and visiting them afterwards pastorally. Baptisms and weddings have brought such joy as well as having the chance to minister in local care homes too. Due to my background in education already and needing to learn other parts of ministry, I have not spent as much time in schools, but what I have been able to do has brought me such pleasure. Schools' ministry will increase over the next year of my training which will be fantastic. Sunday services and leading newer type

services as well as home communions and bible study groups has been another aspect of my curacy that has been wonderful. This has enabled me to get to know all of you much better and to build those really important relationships. Thank you so much for your love, support and encouragement over this last year. God has continued to guide my footsteps, learning, ministry and relationships too. Thank you Lord!

As I prepare for priesting in just a couple of weeks, I have the words trust and obey that keep coming up in prayer and conversation with fellow Christians... these are of course from the hymn... *'Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey'*. There are many good words to be sang in the verses of course, especially in verse one... When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way! While we do his good will, he abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey.

This is my prayer for the next year of my curacy as I begin to understand and deepen my priestly ministry and calling by God to life here in this benefice. I hope that the words might bring you some comfort and inspiration too. May we continue to love and serve the people of this Benefice with humility, humbleness and kindness trusting and obeying the power and awesomeness of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Churchwarden - Vince Smith telephone: 07957 613890 email: vincsmith03@mail.com

Editor & Churchwarden - Danny Briggs telephone: 01543 490114 email: dannybriggs905@gmail.com

The Village Herald advertising - Barry Liddle telephone: 07922 529801 email: liddledarlo@gmail.com

Parish Church website: www.achurchnearyou.com/armitage-st-john-the-baptist

Village website: www.armitagewithhandsacre.co.uk

The Church Room

St John the Baptist church building is open daily but if you require access to the church room please let Vince Smith know on 07957 613890.

The Canterburyys



Your church was pleased to welcome the Canterburyys on Friday June 5th who gave the audience two hours of great songs and music.

Jane and Colin (the Canterburyys) gave us a song list that had the audience singing along to hits including Stuck In The Middle With You, Yesterday, covers of Bob Dylan and Ed Sheeran and lots more.

A wonderful evening complimented at the interval with tea and some wonderful sponge cakes both chocolate and Victoria.

So a big thank you to the Canterburyys and the ladies of the church for serving some lovely refreshments.

Thank you also to Gordon Hewitson who was the official photographer.

Recent Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals at St John the Baptist

17th May Baptism of Dougie Beau Henry Fauch of New Road

9th June Funeral of Maureen Follows of Wolseley Road, Rugeley

The Heavenly July Pudding of Second Helpings

Ingredients:

One large brioche loaf (or any bread quietly approaching it's best before date)
500ml milk
300ml double cream
Three eggs
75g caster sugar
One teaspoon vanilla extract
A handful of strawberries
A handful of raspberries
A few white chocolate chips

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C
2. Tear the brioche into chunks and place into a buttered baking dish
3. Scatter the fruit and chocolate chips over the bread
4. Whisk together the milk, cream, eggs, sugar and vanilla
5. Pour over the bread and leave for 10 minutes to soak
6. Bake for 35-40 minutes until golden and lightly puffed
7. Serve warm with cream, custard or both if nobody is looking.

A Blessing For The Pudding:

Lord, bless this pudding and all who share it.
May it brings smiles to faces, warmth to hearts, and just enough sweetness to keep parish life cheerful.
May the berries be plentiful, the custard never run out, and may no one count the calories until tomorrow.
Bless our fellowship, our laughter, our friendships, and the joy of being together.
And if there should be any pudding left over, may we graciously accept the challenge of finishing it.

Amen

Tessa Riley

ATTENTION: We want to hear from you

Are you having a special Birthday, Anniversary, Graduation or any event or milestone you would like to share with us? Yes, well read on.

Remember this is as much your magazine as ours so help us turn it into a truly magnificent community magazine so let's have your news, gossip, photos in fact

anything that you want to share with your friends and community.

Everyone likes a gossip, - *Gosh he or she's doesn't look a day over 80 or I didn't realise that they achieved a Masters in maths.*

So send your news/photos to dannybriggs905@gmail.com

Armitage Cricket Club

9th May

Penn vs Armitage 1st XI
Armitage won by seven wickets.
Penn all out for 72
Armitage 73-3 off 18.2 overs.
Muhammad Saleem nine overs 4-21
Keiran McKenzie nine overs 2-33
Sam Bakewell 32 not out
Ali Siddiqi 18 runs

16th May

Armitage 1st XI vs Brewood
Armitage all out for 128
Ade Littlewood 31
Adam Shaw 25
Brewood 92-4 (revised total, weather affected)
Ben Beck eight overs 2-29

23rd May

Walsall vs Armitage 1st XI
Walsall won 201-8 45 overs
Ben Beck nine over 3-36
Jack Sandel eight overs 2-29
Armitage 58 all out
Muhammad Saleem 13

30th May

Armitage 1st XI vs Wigtwick and Finchfield
Armitage won 238 all out
Adam Shaw 156 off 88 balls
Ben Beck 37
Wigtwick and Finchfield 164 all out
Ben Beck 5.4 overs 4-15
Adam Shaw 7 overs 3-37

6th June

Swindon vs Armitage 1st XI
Swindon 315-2
Dan Young 9 overs 1-37
Armitage 306-6
Adam Shaw 175 off 94 balls
Dan Young 51 not out
Phil Malcolm 41

The first XI team are continuing the season well and there have been some great innings!

Family Fun Day

Sunday 26th July 11 - 5pm

UK Garrison will be joining us for the day so come along and meet your favourite Star Wars Characters!

Don't forget your Light Saber!

£2 Entry
FREE Entry for Kids Under 16

Sunday 26 July, 2026 11:00 TILL 5:00
Armitage Cricket Club
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WS15 4AH

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- Stan Bowley Trust
- Staffordshire Wildlife
- Owls 4 U
- Rugeley Welfare For Dogs
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Handsacre Methodist Church

JULY 2026

We meet for worship each Sunday morning from 9.30 to 10.30.

Upcoming services:

5th July Rev'd Sam Hagerman
12th July Melody Jones
19th July no service at Handsacre
26th July Rev'd Liz Dunning - Holy Communion

The Vine Café

The Vine café at Handsacre Methodist Church is open from 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. We serve a wide range of coffees, teas, and hot chocolate, as well as homemade cakes, other sweet treats, toasties and omelettes. There is no set charge, but donations can be made. Afternoon teas are bookable on request.

You are welcome to stay as long as you like- we have books, magazines, colouring, board games and jigsaws for you to enjoy.

We also have:

Chapel Lambs, a family play group, Mondays from 9.30am till 12pm.

The Hangout, a group for children in years six to eight with food, chat, games and craft, Mondays 3.30pm to 5pm. Term time only.

Book Swap and Chat, Wednesdays from 1pm. An afternoon all about books!

Craft & Chat, Thursdays from 1pm. Enjoy an afternoon in the Vine with good company, refreshments and crafts. Learn to knit or crochet, or improve your existing skills

Games Night, monthly on Monday evenings, a great opportunity to try a wide range of board and card games and make new friends. The next one is on 6th July from 7.30pm.

Saturday breakfast, 25th July, 9.30am to 12pm.

Please see our website: handsacremethodist.org.uk for more details and updates. The Vine café has a Facebook page at The Vine Cafe & Community Space. Do like and follow for all the latest information.

St John the Baptist hosts the Landor Society

In May, our church played host to a group of local history buffs from the Landor Society.

The Society is a focus for those who wish to learn more about the history of Rugeley and its surrounding Parishes.

About 30 members of the Society visited the church to explore its origins and to learn more about our famous organ, ancient font and bell tower and bells.

Lance Hill and his team of bellringers were on hand to ring and explain the intricacies of campanology and Liz Shaw, our church organist, played the Spode organ and described its origins to the group.

If you'd like to know more about the work of the Society, just go to their web site at landorsocietyrugeley.uk.





MEETING POINT is a community group of activities open to all residents of Armitage with Handsacre. Disabled people can be transported door to door. All welcome.

01543 491704 or gifford_foote@hotmail.co.uk

TUESDAYS 10am - 11.45am - Drop in to Handsacre Methodist room - the Vine Café. Meet friends over a cuppa and join in with activities and an interesting half hour.

7th July: Medley of ideas with Jasmyn & Co

14th July: Councillor Richard Cox - District Council projects

21st July: BRING & BUY STALLS & ACTIVITIES for the family in aid of ALZHEIMERS RESEARCH

Lucky Dip, Name the dog, Hook a duck etc, Raffle, Refreshments

28th July: Music

THURSDAYS 1pm - 3pm: Join the Knit and Natter group at Armitage parish church room. They raise funds for a hospice etc.

ART GROUP NOW HAS A BREAK UNTIL SEPTEMBER

TRACEY from Citizens Advice

is available at the Vine on the third Wednesday of each month from 11am - 2pm.

She can give confidential one to one advice about money matters, consumer issues, benefits, and energy price comparisons.

To book a personal appointment please see Elen or Graham at the Vine or contact 01543 491704

ALL HAVE BEEN INVITED TO THE
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ST THOMAS'S PRIORY
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12pm - 3 pm**

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CONTACT KYLIE 07387 078945

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phone 01543 547507 for help from Community Transport.**



**COACH OUTING TO LIVERPOOL
TUESDAY 4th AUGUST**

Starting from Handsacre at 8.30am,
return from Liverpool at 5.30pm
Adults £20, Children £10.

To book contact Celia at Meeting Point (The Vine)
or 01543 491704

A Victorian show garden

By 1853 Hawkesyard, then still known as Armitage Park, was already being noticed as a place of unusual horticultural ambition. A visitor writing in the *Cottage Gardener* described it as “*curious, interesting, and beautiful*”, with undulating ground and wide views from the house. His main interest was the remarkable range of gardens and glasshouses created under Josiah Spode.

He singled out the Victoria House and adjoining Stove Aquarium, each about thirty-five feet square, where the giant water lily *Victoria regia* was being grown successfully, together with other exotic water plants. The heating system especially caught his attention, as hot-water pipes had been laid near the sides of the tank and close to the surface rather than at the bottom, and the plant itself was thriving.

He also noted the skill of the gardener, Mr Bolass, and the successful cultivation not only of aquatic plants but even melons in the same warm, moist environment.

The account shows that the estate was far more than a country house with ornamental grounds. It was a carefully contrived horticultural showplace, reflecting both wealth and a keen engagement with the latest Victorian advances in glasshouse cultivation.

In 1856, a few years after this visit, Josiah Spode formally renamed Armitage Park as Hawkesyard, a change that marked both a rebranding of the estate and the maturing of his ambitious vision for it. This was not simply experimentation for its own sake. In the years that followed, Hawkesyard's horticultural achievements were recognised beyond the estate itself, with produce and plants exhibited at major national shows and awarded prizes by organisations such as the Royal Horticultural Society and other leading bodies of the period.

These successes place Hawkesyard firmly within the wider mid-19th-century culture of competitive horticulture, where innovation, display, and prestige were closely linked.

Beyond the Victoria House stood a long range of glass devoted to grapes, peaches and nectarines, said to extend for more than a hundred yards. From there the

visitor was led into the pleasure grounds, where the experience became almost theatrical.

A tunnel cut through the hill opened suddenly onto a hollow or crater-like space, at the centre of which stood a circular greenhouse raised on rock. Around it were arranged ferns, rhododendrons, heaths, mosses and lycopodiums, creating what he called a scene like “*fairy land*”. This description is especially valuable because it gives a vivid contemporary picture of the tunnels and the glasshouse on the rocky mound, both of which later passed into local memory and legend.

The same walk continued through contrasting garden scenes. There were terraces bright with flowers, a circular fountain, an arbour of climbing roses, a rocky glen thick with ferns, and an orchid house with moss-covered pillars before the route returned to the vinery. The writer thought it one of the most interesting and varied places he had ever seen.

He also recorded that Spode allowed the grounds to be visited twice a week during the summer, which suggests that the estate - soon to be known as Hawkesyard - was already gaining a local reputation as a place worth seeing. Read alongside later references to prize-winning exhibits and continued horticultural success, the article confirms that mid-Victorian Hawkesyard was designed not simply for private enjoyment but to impress visitors through a sequence of carefully staged horticultural effects.

Richard Ewing grew up in Armitage and is now a local historian with a particular interest in the history of Armitage with Handsacre and St. John the Baptist church.

His work explores the changing story of the parish, its buildings, industries and people, using old documents, maps, photographs, newspaper reports and local memories to bring the past back to life.

He regularly writes articles and books about the village and hopes to help preserve and share the rich history of the parish for future generations. His website can be found at www.armitageops.com.

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